



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

## Department of Human Services

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Chairman Johnson, Chairman Davis  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Joint Hearing on Work Incentives in  
Social Security Disability Programs



74,866 adult Oregonians receive SSI and more than that number receive Medicare because of a disability. We mirror the national statistic that 70% of those with disabilities want to work, including youth exiting school. A common fear of many Social Security beneficiaries in Oregon, is that they will lose their healthcare or benefits if they work. In a 2010 Portland State University study, 44% stated that they had experienced that fear but it was alleviated after Work Incentive Network (WIN) services.

Oregon's WIN program, a network of work and benefits planners, has published results from two survey studies, to date, completed in 2010 and 2011, when the state employment rate was 11% or higher.

A few study results are outlined below:

- Individuals receiving WIN services increased their quarterly earnings by an average of \$333.00, slightly less than the average of studies in other states.
- 4% and 5% of participants began working. While this figure was similar in two studies, it provides incremental increases over time.
- Hours worked increased for two study groups by 38% and 50%.
- 34% who were employed prior to WIN services increased their income.
- TANF dependence of participant households declined 31%.

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation, with assistance from Disability Rights Oregon (DRO), Oregon's WIPA program, developed Oregon's Work Incentive Network (WIN). This high quality program requires that WIN staff participate in WIPA staff training and regular ongoing technical assistance and training. WIN and DRO work to counteract fear and confusion with knowledgeable counsel and careful planning.

Oregon, like other states, lacks the capacity to serve all SSI and SSDI recipients who want to return to work but are concerned about having health insurance and income support when unable to work full time. Support and expansion of WIPA is critical to these individuals' successful return to work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the Joint Hearing record.

Stephaine Parrish Taylor, Administrator  
Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services

Cc: Oregon's Congressional Delegation  
Erinn Kelley Siel, Director, Oregon Department of Human Services

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